



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING



Jennifer M. Granholm  
Governor

Thomas D. Watkins, Jr.  
Superintendent of Public  
Instruction

## READ, EDUCATE AND DEVELOP YOUTH (R.E.A.D.Y.) PROGRAM

Governor Granholm stated in her 2003 State of the State address, “By the time a child arrives for kindergarten, 85 percent of the brain is developed. If the brain is purposefully stimulated and nurtured before a child is old enough to tie his or her shoes, that child’s lifelong capacity to learn will be forever enhanced. And, unfortunately, if it is not, an opportunity is lost forever.”

The Governor continued by saying, “The challenge to completely shift our thinking to seize this incredible opportunity is immense. Let the immensity of this shift not deter us, but stir us to concerted action. First, we must focus on educating new parents – before their baby is born, in the maternity ward, at check-ups and later at home. No one wants to be a bad parent, but not everyone understands what it takes to be a good one, particularly when it comes to stimulating and nurturing the supple minds of young children.”

### 1998-2002 Kit



In 1998, the Michigan Department of Education, in coordination with early childhood and early literacy experts throughout the state, designed the Read, Educate and Develop Youth (R.E.A.D.Y.) program. This program was developed to provide parents and caregivers with engaging early childhood materials and activities to enhance a child’s lifelong capacity to learn. This program is also a priority with both the State Board of Education and the Michigan Ready To Succeed Partnership.

R.E.A.D.Y. is a national award-winning program and has become one of the most effective, cost-efficient early childhood parent information efforts in Michigan’s history.

The main component of the R.E.A.D.Y. program is the R.E.A.D.Y. kit designed to help parents stimulate and nurture the supple minds of young children. This colorful and engaging kit contains both age-appropriate and non age-specific information and materials. Age-specific materials for infants (0-1), toddlers (1-2), and preschoolers

(2-4) are packaged in a R.E.A.D.Y. folder and include:

- A quality children’s book;
- Over a dozen parent/child learning activities;
- A reminder activity magnet; and,
- A pocket-sized list of enjoyable age-appropriate books.

Non age-specific kit materials include:

- A R.E.A.D.Y. brochure on the importance of engaging and reading to young children;
- A child development guide;
- The nationally acclaimed *I Am Your Child* development video tape; and,
- A music cassette of nursery rhymes and children’s favorite songs.

### STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

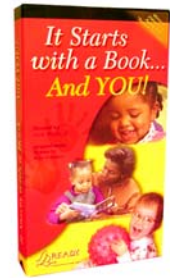
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In 2000, the *R.E.A.D.Y. for School Literacy Pack* was developed to provide parents of preschool and early elementary children with over thirty easy to use **literacy-building activities** centered on the *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* book. The response to this “for sale” pack has been outstanding, resulting in orders for over 50,000 packets. Pack Cost \$3.75.



In addition, the program developed the award-winning “It Starts with a Book ... And You” video illustrating model early childhood parent/child activities. This product is also for sale for \$6.50.

All production, sales, and distribution are managed through a partnership with the Educational Materials Center (EMC) at Central Michigan University (800) 214-8961.

### **Program Results – R.E.A.D.Y. WORKS!**

- R.E.A.D.Y. is one of the most popular and successful parent information efforts in Michigan history stressing the importance of early learning and reading.
- According to program research, over 95 percent of families receiving the program’s R.E.A.D.Y. kit remembered, valued, and used its materials.
- Two thirds of parents and caregivers were motivated to read and interact more with their young child -- critical factors in ensuring children enter school READY.
- R.E.A.D.Y. has become a national model and has been awarded the prestigious Council of State Governments (CSG) Innovations Award.
- Total families impacted by the program exceed 630,000.
- Parents valued the kit at \$20-\$50.
- Parents, educators, communities, legislators, the State Board of Education, state and local agencies, and associations such as the Michigan Ready To Succeed Partnership, Michigan Business Leaders for Education Excellence (MBLEE), and others support the program.

### **R.E.A.D.Y. Kit Distribution**

To date, over **630,000** R.E.A.D.Y. kits have been hand delivered to parents of young children in Michigan. Prior to 2002, R.E.A.D.Y. kits and products were distributed through a network of county coordinators who performed this service free of charge. These included: intermediate school districts, Family Independence Agency offices, human service agencies, libraries, family resource centers, Multi-Purpose Collaborative Bodies (MPCB’s), *Early On*® offices, Head Start programs, and others.



However, the quantity of kits distributed varied widely county by county and was dependent upon the resources of local coordinators. The percentage of parents of 0-4 year-olds receiving kits per county ranged from a high of 60 percent in urban areas to a low of less than 10 percent in rural areas. From 1998 through 2001, approximately 30 percent of parents with young children received the kit **statewide**.

Specifically:

- Most birthing hospitals in urban areas distributed R.E.A.D.Y. kits.
- All Family Independence Agency specialists conducting home visits received and distributed kits.
- All licensed child care providers received kits.
- Most 2000-2001 Head Start programs received and distributed kits.
- Hundreds of community literacy and early childhood programs used the R.E.A.D.Y. kits as a critical home visiting and parent involvement component including ASAP-PIE grantees.

## A GREAT START FOR R.E.A.D.Y.



Since her inauguration, Governor Granholm has discussed the need to provide new and expecting parents with information to stimulate and nurture their child's development. The R.E.A.D.Y.

program is uniquely poised to accomplish this goal through the development of a more comprehensive R.E.A.D.Y. kit for parents of infants. This new kit goes beyond the current "early learning" kit by incorporating its most effective components and adds important health, safety, and nutrition information to become a comprehensive "early childhood development" kit that focuses on "the whole child."

Continued products include:

- A quality children's book;
- Parent/child learning activities;
- Activity magnet;
- A pocket-sized list of enjoyable age appropriate books;
- A child development wheel guide;
- The nationally acclaimed *I Am Your Child* development video tape;
- A music cassette of nursery rhymes and children's favorite songs; and
- A R.E.A.D.Y. product brochure.

New additions include the Michigan Department of Community Health, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and Family Independence Agency brochures:

- *Lead – Is Your Child Safe?*;
- *Good for You, Good for Your Children*;
- Breastfeeding: Getting Started in 5 Easy Steps;
- Save a Life, Sleep Right;
- *MIChild Health Insurance You Need*;
- *MIChild/ Healthy Kids Application*;
- *How to Choose a Child Care Provider*; and
- The kit also contains information on car seat safety from Highway, Safety and Planning and Healthy Weight in Preschool Children cards.

To store this information we have added three new folders:

- Health and Safety;
- My Child's Records (for report cards, immunizations records and other important information);
- Caring, Playing, and Learning (replaces the previous infant folder).

## R.E.A.D.Y.'s Future

During FY 1998 - FY 2001, the R.E.A.D.Y. program received a total of \$7.7 million in federal and state funds and \$1.1 million in multi-year corporate financial contributions to produce and distribute over **630,000** free R.E.A.D.Y. kits to Michigan parents at a cost of \$10 per kit, including shipping and handling. Expenditures also included product development, test marketing, and program administration.

Governor Granholm has strongly supported the R.E.A.D.Y. program; and, while Attorney General, provided the program with substantial resources derived from a Toys-R-Us settlement.

The R.E.A.D.Y. program has been the only state-funded early learning program in Michigan history targeting **all parents** of young children. The program has been proven both effective and cost efficient. However, as the result of declining state revenues, state funding for the program was eliminated in FY 2002.

## New 2003 Kit



Since that time, to ensure the long-term viability of the R.E.A.D.Y. program and its products, the Michigan Department of Education has entered into an agreement with Central Michigan University's Educational Materials Center to continue to provide kits and products remaining in inventory on a for-sale basis. While R.E.A.D.Y. products have remained available, the parents who may benefit the most from this kit are also those who can afford it the least.

In her 2003 State of the State address, Governor Granholm said, "I will ask Michigan's foundation community, which has already supported important work on this issue (early childhood and literacy efforts) in our state, to do even more." As a result of the Governor's commitment and existing R.E.A.D.Y. inventory, foundation support has been secured to:

- Provide 40,000 free kits to the parents of our neediest infants who qualify for Medicaid;
- Provide free Hispanic R.E.A.D.Y. kits to our Spanish speaking parents; and
- Develop a new Arabic kit.

2003 corporate sponsors include:

<i>Consumers Energy</i>	<i>Scholastic</i>
<i>Dow Chemical</i>	<i>Skillman Foundation</i>
<i>I Am Your Child Foundation</i>	

1998-2002 corporate sponsors included:

<i>Allstate Insurance</i>	<i>Ford Motor Company</i>	<i>Sony Music Special Products</i>
<i>Consumers Energy</i>	<i>Harper Collins Publishers</i>	<i>Scholastic</i>
<i>Daimler Chrysler Corporation</i>	<i>I Am Your Child</i>	<i>United Parcel Service</i>
<i>Detroit Edison</i>	<i>Kmart Corporation</i>	<i>Walt Disney Corporation</i>
<i>Dow Chemical</i>	<i>Sesame Street</i>	<i>Whirlpool Corporation</i>

In addition, the R.E.A.D.Y. program will continue to provide high quality, low cost products including:

- R.E.A.D.Y. kits for toddlers and preschoolers
- R.E.A.D.Y. learning packs for toddlers or preschoolers containing a book, learning activities and activity magnet and pocket-size book list;
- The popular R.E.A.D.Y. for School pack designed for four to six year-olds filled with over 30 literacy building activities involving the book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*; and
- The award-winning R.E.A.D.Y. video titled "***It Starts with a Book and YOU!***" illustrating everyday learning activities parents and caregivers can use to help increase the language and literacy development of young children.

The new R.E.A.D.Y. kit will be distributed free to 40,000 parents of infants eligible for Medicaid through interested home-visiting programs, as well as, health clinics, family practices, Women, Infant and Children (WIC) offices, and other health care professionals. In addition, to ensure all parents have access to the new infant kit, parents, family members, caregivers, parenting professionals, family literacy experts, educators, and anyone else important in the life of an infant can purchase a kit for \$10. If you have questions on Medicaid contact (888) 367-6557.

Also, for the first time, as a result of the high level of interest nationwide in early childhood development, a similar National Infant Kit and the R.E.A.D.Y. for School pack will be available for parents and programs outside Michigan at a cost of \$15, of which, \$5 dollars of every sales goes to fund free kits for Michigan parents.

All R.E.A.D.Y. products may be purchased on-line at <http://www.emc.cmich.edu/ready> or by requesting an order form at (800) 214-8961.

### **GREAT STORES, GREAT CAUSE**

Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, R.E.A.D.Y. kits can be purchased at a very special store called the *Store of Dreams*. This store was the dream of Bob Schostak, a mall developer who has generously donated an entire store in three metro Detroit malls to showcase early childhood and local education programs, as well as retail nearly 100 products to benefit important charities like St. Vincent de Paul, the Michigan Humane Society, Detroit Public Television, and the Detroit Historical Museum. *Store of Dreams'* locations are in Macomb Mall in Roseville, Laurel Park Place in Livonia, and Fountain Walk in Novi.